

Benenson Awards in the Arts: 2011 Awardees

The Edward H. Benenson Awards in the Arts are given annually to undergraduate students to broaden their educational and professional perspectives in the arts. The awards are made on a competitive basis for the most outstanding project proposals and are determined by a committee of distinguished faculty representing all areas of the visual and performing arts. There are eight award winners this year.

Graduating senior Violeta Foreman, a visual arts major, received a Benenson Award for supplies and materials to allow her to continue exploring the color systems she has developed through her independent study work. Specifically, she plans to work with the *Target* icon, morphing it into a multicolor landscape of circular shapes. Her project will involve studies in color theory, looking to Josef Albers for inspiration. Violetta plans to complete two large-scale paintings, including a multi-color painting that explores the complex relationships of color juxtapositions, and a second painting of a yellow-monochromatic style, to hone in on one color family and explore within its limitations, complementing rather than juxtaposing color relationships. She plans to complete the two paintings by May of 2012 and to exhibit the paintings in an art gallery.

Sarah Goetz, a graduating senior visual and media studies major, received a Benenson Award for a project entitled *Memory Networks*. Over a three-week period, Sarah plans to follow the path of her grandfather, one of the first recreational vehicle owners, from his birthplace in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to where he was stationed at the White Sands Missile Range, just outside of Las Cruces, New Mexico. She will collect sound, moving and still imagery with a sound recorder, her grandfather's VHS prosumer camera, and 35mm color film, and then digitize her VHS footage and intercut it with archive educational films on the subject of mass transport and highways as arteries of the nation, with a poetic voiceover from interviews she conducts. She plans to submit the resulting product, a 10-15minute film, to film festivals and bring it back to Duke as an example of what can be done with antiquated media. She writes, "Through this work, I will examine the entropy of an interstate highway system - which drew the adventurous minds and hearts of the American people of the 1950s and 60s - as evidence of the faint memory of interconnectivity of my grandfather's generation."

Monica Hogan, a junior dance major, received a Benenson Award for her senior distinction project in dance. She plans to conceptualize, design, direct, and choreograph her own dance concert at Duke in May 2011, with a focus on the incorporation and collaboration of technology and art with dance choreography. The award will support her research in New York City in summer 2011, where she plans to research innovative ways to incorporate technology into the choreography and performance space for her show, working on set and prop design, and beginning to conceptualize and choreograph the works. She is planning: 1) a part-time internship with a NYC-based dance company; 2) interviews and independent research at EMPAC (the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center) at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, at the 3LD: Art and Technology Center -- a facility owned and managed by the 3-Legged Dog Media and Theater Group, and at the School of Visual Arts in New York; and 3) regular dance classes at the Peridance Capezio Dance Center.

Courtney Liu, a sophomore psychology major, received a Benenson award to attend the Hubbard Street Dance Company's 2011 Summer Intensive program in Chicago, which offers an intensive, one-of-a-kind experience for advanced students with a passion for dance. Students attend daily ballet and modern classes and learn Hubbard Street Dance Company repertory, working with the artistic staff and dancers of Hubbard Street Dance Chicago.

With Benenson support, Richard Paez, a sophomore theater major, will attend the Summer Conservatory at Michael Howard Studios: The Professional Acting Studio for Theater, Film, and Television, in New York City. The six-week summer program is geared towards university students and professionals looking for an opportunity to work on their craft full-time. The program includes scene study, movement, voice, camera, Shakespeare, acting techniques, clown, improvisation, and the business of acting, all taught by the Michael Howard Studios' faculty.

Graduating senior Maya Robinson, a visual and media studies major, received a Benenson Award to allow her to take professional workshops and volunteer as the Multimedia Coordinator at the Look3 Festival of the Photograph which brings together the world's leading photographers for exhibitions, presentations, interviews, and workshops. It will be held in Charlottesville, Virginia in June 2011. She writes, "Working at the Look3 Festival as an artist and staff member will be a great opportunity to blend my interests in both multimedia and photography and to learn and be inspired by amazing photography. Seeing the work of others sets in motion what comes next."

Justine Tiu, a graduating senior electrical engineering major, is the recipient of a Benenson Award to attend the Penland School of Crafts workshop *Bag of Tricks*, taught by resident artist Margaret Couch Cogswell. The two-week long summer workshop is geared towards expanding cover-making and bookbinding techniques. Justine plans to apply the skills and concepts she acquires at this workshop class to create an artist's book documenting the past two decades of her father's work as "one of New York City's best HVAC system design engineers."

Da Yang, a graduating senior biology major, received a Benenson Award to support his conducting studies with Ransom Wilson, professor of music at Yale University and the conductor and founder of the Solisti New York Orchestra. For a year, he will take biweekly lessons with him on instrumental conducting, to "develop modes of expression in both body language and baton, to fine-tune the skill of score analysis, and become proficient at score reduction on keyboard." He will also use Benenson funds to participate in master classes in conducting at NYU, Manhattan School of Music, and Julliard throughout the year. Da hopes that his studies will prepare him to audition for conducting positions in New York orchestras. As a more long-term goal, he hopes to form networks with professional musicians and music communities in the inner city that would enable him to found an inner-city pediatric clinic that uses community music as a central element of healing.